

# SUPREME COURT

Chief Justice Loretta H. Rush  
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June 18, 2015

The Honorable Mike Pence  
Governor of Indiana  
200 W. Washington Street  
Room 206, State House  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Pence:

The Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission met on Wednesday, June 10, 2015, and selected a panel of nominees for the vacancy on the Indiana Court of Appeals that will be created by Judge Ezra H. Friedlander's retirement. On behalf of the Commission, I am transmitting to you the three candidates the Commission nominated as the three most highly-qualified applicants: Judge Robert R. Altice, Jr., Marion Superior Court, Civil Division 5; Judge Christopher M. Goff, Wabash Superior Court; and Mrs. Patricia Caress McMath of Indianapolis.

In making this selection, the Commission's extensive evaluations reviewed a wide range of pertinent information in considering the non-exclusive list of statutory factors: legal education and honors; legal writings; reputation in the practice of law; physical condition and health; financial interests; and public service activities, writings, speeches, and contributions to the improvement of the administration of justice. As required by statute, the following is the Commission's written evaluation of each nominee.

We have forwarded to your office the nominees' complete applications. I offer the following brief observations about their qualifications.

## **Marion Superior Court Judge Robert R. Altice, Jr.**

Those familiar with Indiana courts have long recognized Judge Robert Altice as a dedicated advocate of the justice process. One prominent practitioner describes Judge Altice as "a one-man positive force for good." Other attorneys and judges have heaped effusive praise upon his strong leadership skills, unparalleled consensus-building abilities, and charismatic personality.

After earning his undergraduate degree from Miami University, Judge Altice obtained a master's degree in criminal justice administration from the University of Central Missouri, where he was honored as "Graduate Student of the Year" in his department. He received his law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law.

Judge Altice's legal career began in Jackson County, Missouri, handling felony cases as a deputy prosecutor before being promoted to Chief Deputy Prosecutor for the Drug Unit. He then practiced with a Kansas City civil law firm, focusing on medical malpractice defense. After moving to Indianapolis, he joined the law firm of Wooden McLaughlin & Sterner, concentrating on insurance defense.

In 1994, Judge Altice returned to prosecution, handling a major felony caseload as a deputy prosecutor for the Marion County Prosecutor's Office. He served as Chief of the Felony Division from 1997 to 2000, prosecuting a number of high profile felonies while also providing management support to 35 deputy prosecutors. Judge Altice also served as the Office's Chief Counsel, working with the Indiana General Assembly to amend laws on domestic battery and possession of firearms by violent felons. As a prosecutor, Judge Altice tried over a hundred major felony jury trials, including twenty-five murder cases, and countless bench trials.

Since his election to the Marion County bench in 2000, Judge Altice has presided over both criminal and civil dockets. As judge of Marion Superior Court, Criminal Division 2 from 2001 to 2012, he presided over 250 major felony jury trials, including 75 murder trials (seven death penalty trials). Among the many high-profile cases Judge Altice has officiated are *State v. Desmond Turner*, *State v. Tommy Holland*, and *State v. Ronald Covington, Jr.* These cases were heavily covered in the media, and Judge Altice was tasked with balancing the need for judicial transparency with his careful consideration of complex and sensitive pretrial motions.

While presiding over some of the most serious criminal matters in the state, Judge Altice also served as chair of the Marion Superior Court Criminal Term from 2005 to 2007, as a member of the Executive Committee for the Marion Superior Court from 2007 to 2009, and as Presiding Judge of the Executive Committee from 2009 to 2011. As the Presiding Judge, he was responsible for the administration of the Marion Superior Court, with a \$50 million annual budget, and managed a court staff of more than 850 employees. He also hosted a television show on the government access channel, titled "Off the Bench," in which other civic leaders appeared as guests to discuss public affairs matters.

In January 2013, Judge Altice moved to the civil division of the Marion Superior Court. As judge of Superior Court 5, he has officiated thirteen civil jury trials. Judge Altice was appointed as chair of the Marion Superior Court Civil Term in January 2015. He also has served as a hearing officer on three attorney discipline cases.

Throughout his judicial career, Judge Altice has held leadership roles in organizations that improve the administration of justice. He accepted special assignments from the Indiana Supreme Court on the Judicial Performance Task Force, which examined whether judicial evaluations might be useful in Indiana, and the Cameras in the Courtroom Project, a pilot project which allowed cameras in certain courtrooms under limited conditions. During Judge Altice's tenure on the Marion County Community Corrections Advisory Board, the Duval Work Release Center in Marion County was constructed and opened.

Judge Altice is a member of the Indiana Judges Association, the Indiana State Bar Association, and the Lawyer's Club of Indianapolis. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Judicial Conference of Indiana; is a member and past president of the Sagamore American Inn of Court, and is a member and former chair of the Indiana Judicial Conference Community Relations Committee. In April 2015, Judge Altice was appointed to serve on an ad hoc Tax Court Advisory Task Force.

His community activities include prior service on the Board of Directors for the following organizations: Indianapolis Police Athletic League, the Martin Luther King Community Development Corporation, and the Coburn Place Safe Haven, a transitional housing facility for domestic abuse victims. Judge Altice also participated on the Super Bowl Legal Subcommittee. He has presented on legal and ethical issues for the Indiana Continuing Legal Education Forum, the Indiana Judicial Center, and various Indiana bar associations. In his spare time, he enjoys gardening, playing golf, and reading.

When asked about the professional legacy he would like to leave if appointed to the Court of Appeals, Judge Altice responded by warmly recalling the dozens of interns he has mentored over the years and voiced his hope to be remembered as "a great mentor to students and young lawyers."

### **Wabash Superior Court Judge Christopher M. Goff**

As a civic and community leader, Judge Christopher Goff has developed a solid reputation as an effective problem-solver who acts with integrity, compassion, and justice. A judicial colleague notes, "While his nature is 'gentle and humble,' there is a tremendous reservoir of strength in Judge Goff." Other knowledgeable observers voice how his wisdom, reflective thinking, and demeanor not only make him the "go to" person on legal issues but also have enabled him to build a consensus with stakeholders to promote innovative court programs that have created a positive impact on the justice system.

Judge Goff obtained his undergraduate degree from Ball State University, graduating *summa cum laude* and earning departmental honors in history. As an undergraduate, he also served as president of Pi Sigma Alpha, a political science honorary.

He earned his law degree from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington. During law school, he served as managing editor for the *Federal Communications Law Journal* and served as a research assistant for Professor Sara J. Hughes, the law school's university scholar and fellow in commercial law.

After law school, Judge Goff served as an associate at the Huntington law firm of Mills & Northrop, and, within eighteen months, he became a named partner of the firm. From 1997 to 2005, he had a diverse general practice which included domestic relations, criminal, collections, wills and estates, personal injury, and small business cases. As Judge Goff described the practice of a county seat practitioner, "You get to be Atticus Finch and there is nothing like it," and described his clients as "ordinary Hoosiers seeking assistance with ordinary legal problems."

While Judge Goff was in private practice, he also served as a part-time Title IV-D (Child Support) Commissioner for Wabash Circuit Court and served as a part-time public defender for two years for the Huntington Circuit and Superior Courts. Judge Goff tried ten criminal jury trials and hundreds of bench trials as a lawyer. His trial practice ranged from simple misdemeanors to complex civil and criminal legal matters.

Before becoming a judge, he served for five years (two as president) on the Huntington County Police Merit Board. In 1999, the Huntington County Leadership Academy awarded him the Distinguished Alumni Award for establishing the Huntington County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program. In 2001, and again in 2002, he was recognized as Huntington County's Volunteer Legal Services Pro Bono Attorney of the Year.

Appointed to the Wabash Superior Court in 2005, Judge Goff was retained by the voters during the 2008 and 2014 general elections. He presides over a general civil and criminal docket and has officiated twenty-five jury trials, ranging from misdemeanors to a regionally high-profile civil case involving the death of a newspaper carrier who was struck by a police car. Judge Goff also has served as a hearing officer in an attorney discipline case. During his fifteen years as a judicial officer, Judge Goff has never been reversed on appeal.

Since taking the bench, Judge Goff implemented two certified problem-solving courts—Wabash County's Drug Court and Family Drug Treatment Court—in a successful effort to reduce recidivism by enabling defendants, through a cooperative multi-agency approach, to make life-saving changes. Using existing staff and efficiently organizing the docket, he accomplished these goals with minimal cost to the taxpayers. During his judicial tenure, he helped draft the District Governance Plan for Administrative District 9 of the Judicial Conference of Indiana, a number of local rules, and the chapter on no-contact orders for the Indiana Judicial Center's Protection Order Deskbook.

His commitment to improving the administration of justice also can be seen in his work with myriad public service organizations, including the Community Support Consortium Alternative to State Operated Facilities Placement and the Wabash County Community Corrections Advisory Board. In cooperation with a local community mental health provider (Bowen Center), Judge Goff established an Alternative Batterer's Program as a sentencing option on domestic violence cases.

Judge Goff serves on the Board of Directors of the Judicial Conference of Indiana, is a member and past vice president of the Board of Directors for White's Residential and Family Services, and serves as vice president on the Board of Directors of the Wabash County YMCA. He served on the Board of Directors for the Wabash County Chamber of Commerce from 2007-2010 and was vice president for the Huntington County Bar Association from 2003-2005.

Over the years, Judge Goff has participated in many charitable efforts to support juveniles and the community, and he regularly speaks at local schools, service clubs, and churches about the law and courts. On various occasions, Judge Goff has taught for the Indiana Judicial Center. In his spare time, he enjoys training to race in 50K trail runs, which are held in late December, and has completed three such races.

When asked what he hoped his legacy would be if selected to serve on the Court of Appeals, Judge Goff humbly responded, "When I leave any place, I hope it's a little bit better place than when I found it."

### **Patricia Caress McMath, Esq.**

Professional colleagues—and even adversaries—describe Patricia McMath as a person who continually inspires the best from those around her. During her time as chair of the Indianapolis Bar Association's Standing Committee on Professionalism, Patricia McMath's energy and commitment was said to "activate the members ... who wanted to work not just for the bar, public, and mission of the committee, but to work for Tricia as well." The Commission was particularly impressed with her strong and concise legal writing and intellectually honest advocacy.

Patricia McMath received her undergraduate degree in business from Indiana University, concentrating on transportation and public utilities management. She went on to attend Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington, after receiving the Maurer School of Law Fellowship based on her high LSAT scores.

After earning her law degree, Patricia McMath worked as the chief judicial law clerk for Indiana Court of Appeals Judge Robert H. Staton for two years before joining the law firm of Wooden McLaughlin & Sterner, where she focused on collection, bankruptcy, and real estate matters. From 1991 to 1996, she returned to the appellate court, working as a

judicial law clerk for Indiana Court of Appeals Judge Betty Barteau. In addition to her legal research and writing duties, Patricia McMath assisted Judge Barteau with drafting speeches for presentations at various law conferences. From 1992 to 1999, Patricia McMath also worked as an adjunct legal writing instructor for the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law and, in 1999, received a Teaching Excellence Recognition Award.

From 1996 through 2010, Patricia McMath was self-employed as a contract appellate public defender for the Marion County Public Defender Agency and the Indiana State Public Defender. As a contract public defender, she represented indigent defendants in all types of criminal appeals, from misdemeanors to murders. She also advocated on behalf of parents in CHINS (child in need of services) and termination of parental rights appeals, juveniles in delinquency appeals, and respondents in involuntary commitment appeals in mental health cases.

Concurrent to her work as a public defender, Patricia McMath conducted legal research and drafted discovery/pretrial documents (including summary judgment motions) for a civil attorney. Patricia McMath currently works as a full-time attorney in the appellate division of the Marion County Public Defender Agency. Besides handling a wide range of appeals, she represents respondents on involuntary commitment hearings and appeals from commitment orders.

Throughout her career, Patricia McMath has worked diligently to make legal services more accessible for the less fortunate. Besides her advocacy as a public defender, she has participated in the Ask a Lawyer service, a face-to-face free legal advice program implemented by the Indianapolis Bar Association (IBA), and was instrumental in establishing the IBA's Legal Line, a monthly program which allows the public to obtain free over-the-phone legal advice. The IBA's Legal Line program was recognized by the American Bar Association with a Second Place Award for Service to the Public Programs. As a member of the Impact Fund Committee of the Indianapolis Bar Foundation (IBF), she helps solicit and review grant applications for the IBF's annual award designed to help fund non-profit legal services. She also served on the IBA's Task Force on Pro Bono Civil Matters and received the President's Award in 1999 for her efforts.

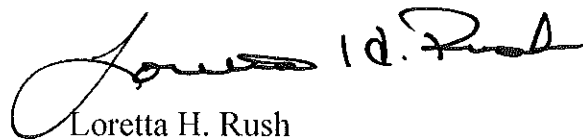
Patricia McMath's commitment to improving the administration of justice also can be seen in the active role she has taken to mentor other lawyers and educate young people about the practice of law. She has been a repeat participant in the IBA's annual Gold E. Locks presentations to elementary schools, in which lawyers show a video depicting Goldilocks on trial for burglary and then lead the class through the process of determining a verdict. She has served as a mentor in a joint program sponsored by the Indianapolis Bar Association and Indiana State Bar Association, is a frequent lecturer for continuing legal education seminars, and previously has organized legal education programs addressing the issues young lawyers face.

Patricia McMath currently serves on the Board of the Indianapolis Bar Association and is a past chair and current member of the Standing Committee on Professionalism. Due in part to her efforts, the Professionalism Committee received the President's Award in 2013 for its accomplishments assisting another organization to provide needed school supplies to underprivileged students and recently created a resource for CLE presentations on civility in the legal profession. She is a member of the Indiana Public Defender Council and a Master Distinguished Fellow with the Indianapolis Bar Foundation. She also is very involved in a number of charitable efforts within the local community. In her spare time, Patricia McMath enjoys running (having previously trained for and completed three mini-marathons), exploring Indiana with her family, watching movies, and reading.

When asked what she hoped to leave as her legacy if appointed to the Court of Appeals, Patricia McMath cited the continuing need for attorneys for indigent litigants and quoted the Court's mission statement: "everyone has equal access to justice." Her hope is to continue to support that mission.

I would be pleased to discuss any of these candidates with you in greater detail. I feel confident that you will conclude that all three nominees are of a high caliber and would be a lasting credit to the Court of Appeals of Indiana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Loretta H. Rush", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Loretta H. Rush  
Chief Justice of Indiana